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SUBJECT: FMF PROJECT GREATLY IMPROVES DJIBOUTIS MARITIME SECURITY

11. SUMMARY. A \$14.2 million Foreign Military Funding (FMF) project to improve naval facilities in the northern Djibouti port city of Obock will significantly improve GODJ capacity to protect its littoral frontier in the vicinity of the strategic Bab-el-Mandeb strait. Related USG programs to furnish fast patrol boats and Regional Maritime Awareness Capability (RMAC) will further enhance Djibouti's naval presence and capability in the north. END SUMMARY.

12. Embassy Djibouti, along with Djibouti's Ministry of National Defense, dedicated the \$14.2M Obock Pier Project on January 14. This is the largest single FMF case ever completed in sub-Saharan Africa. The military facility included a ninety meter pier, capable of mooring up to four patrol boats; an administration and berthing building, including office space and billeting for thirty sailors; utilities, including a fully automated fuel and water storage and distribution system, fire suppression system, and backup power; and security fencing. A civilian commercial and fishing facility was built to mitigate the loss of space due to the military construction. It includes a forty-five meter pier, a boat ramp, an ice house with dual ice-making machines, and a classroom/utility room. Construction on the project began in April 2007 and was completed in November 2008.

13. The pier project is one aspect of a comprehensive program to improve Djibouti's ability to monitor and control its territorial waters. The embassy delivered two fifty-five foot SeaArk Marine Dauntless patrol boats to the Djiboutian Navy through a \$2.6M FMF case. These vessels represent a tremendous improvement in Djibouti's capacity to interdict bad actors in its littoral space. Additionally, the RMAC program is in development. This program will provide Djibouti's navy with a comprehensive surveillance program, including radar, an Automatic Identification System (AIS), long-range thermal cameras, and closed-circuit cameras. The \$7.9M Section 1206 program is under development. It is approximately 25% complete and expected to be finished in July 2009. These programs, combined with ongoing training and exchanges will greatly increase the Djiboutian Navy's capacity in protecting critical infrastructure and in combating piracy, terrorist movements, smuggling and human trafficking.

14. The ceremony was well attended by dignitaries and the local population, and received extensive local media coverage. Speakers included Djibouti's Prime Minister, Minister of National Defense, Chief of Naval Operations, and local prefect. The U.S. Ambassador and the Commander of Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) also made public addresses. Other attendees included the Djiboutian Ministers of Transport, Cooperation, and Fishing; the Armed Forces of Djibouti's Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff; and the Commander of French Forces, Djibouti.

15. COMMENT. These programs will have immediate impact on Djiboutian defense capability. Djibouti's Chief of Naval Operations plans to double the Djiboutian naval presence in Obock from 25 to 50 personnel, and to establish a permanent command. Fuel stores in Obock will permit patrol vessels to perform longer patrols on the northern coast (rather than returning to Djibouti City to refuel). Improved port facilities will also support re-supply of GODJ forces on the border with Eritrea; these GODJ forces receive supplies by convoy from Obock after arrival by boat from Djibouti. We expect the program to improve the GODJ's ability to address illegal trade and human trafficking to Yemen, as well as enhance its posture with regard to piracy, illegal fishing and environmental violations, while strengthening its defense against Eritrea. END COMMENT.  
SWAN

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